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Approved For Release 2003/05/05 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003600060004-7

Assistant Director, Reports and Estimates

24 September 1947

Assistant Director, Collection and Dissemination

Revision of National Intelligence Requirements (NIR)

1. In par. 2 a of the ORE status report of 5 September, it is noted that specific recommendations for revision of the NIR program, as requested by ICAPS, are being developed and are expected to be ready soon in the form of a proposed NIA Directive.
2. OCD is greatly interested in any revision of the form of the NIRs. The previous experience of this office has indicated that the present form of the National Intelligence Requirements, as used by CIA, has tended to frustrate, rather than to promote, effective collection. While the NIRs have been expressed in language rendering them suitable primarily as a broad guide for research programs for the production of finished intelligence, they have instead been frequently misconstrued within CIA as outlines for collection. Therefore, in accordance with instructions, OCD has been obliged to send these NIRs to the field for the "guidance" of ambassadors and other field representatives. This has seemed almost a fruitless gesture. The NIRs have in no way been suitable as collection directives. This has been fully recognized by the agencies, and consequently it has been only after considerable discussion that the agencies have sent them to the field. Their accompanying instructions have specifically stated the guide nature of the NIRs and have stated that specific collection directives based thereon would follow from the various agencies. This follow-up has not been properly effected by CIA or any agency.
3. The NIRs as now written have stated requirements in broad generalities without giving due recognition to the fact that portions of the information in subject fields so broadly described must - of necessity - already be available in ORE's files. The distinction between what is on hand and what is needed has not appeared in any transmission of these formal NIRs to OCD. The highly important step of analyzing the essential elements of information into a list of missing portions, or "indications", which could be used as the basis for specific collection directives has been omitted. Thus, (referring to the chart on page 33 of Field Manual 30-5, by way of illustration) the handling of NIR-China by CIA has consisted of sending the essential elements, (Column (1)) straight to the field agencies (Column (4)), without the necessary intermediate steps indicated by Columns (2) and (3).
4. In view of the above, it is believed that the actual collection experiences with the NIR program to date should be discussed in detail with those who are currently revising the program. If you agree, OCD will be pleased to have Colonel Nicholas, Colonel Boberg and Colonel Sands effect such discussion at the convenience of your office.

"Signed",

C. E. OLSEN

Captain, U. S. N.

Assistant Director for

Collection and Dissemination

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cc: ICAPS

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